

RTR, SJA prepare for upcoming battle as ...

Depot basketball teams swing back into league action

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After a long holiday break, Depot Marines are lacing up their sneakers and taking back to the courts as the bulk of the 2003-04 Marine Corps Community Services-South Carolina Intramural Basketball Season lies ahead of them.

After achieving initial success during the first few weeks, two Parris Island teams are positive about the remainder of the season. Out of a 16-team league, RTR sits atop the standings with a perfect record of 6-0, while SJA holds the number-three slot at 5-1.

Last year, RTR battled with sporadic attendance all season, but still managed to finish third in the playoffs. Although those returning from last year's roster were fairly pleased with those results, they are hopeful about taking the team a step further this season.

"Our finish last year was a great achievement, considering the team consisted of drill instructors who were constantly going on and off quota," said Michael Fisher, the head coach for RTR. "I think that anything is possible this year, as long as we stay focused on one game at a time and not get ahead of ourselves."

Fisher's optimism extends from confidence in his players, whom he says possess an essential mindset that has lent to their success thus far.

"Our unselfishness is our biggest asset," said Fisher. "We have a mature team. The



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Mike McNabb, a guard for SJA, drives to the hoop in a game against Over Thirty at the Air Station's Paul L. Siegmund Fitness Complex Tuesday. Over Thirty won the game 55-51, improving their record to 7-3.

players understand that in order to be successful, they have to play as one."

Although hopeful about what is to come in the weeks ahead, Fisher is realistic and understands that it is impossible to have a complete grasp on the all the league's competition at this point.

"I've seen H&HS ATC, the Naval Hospital and Over Thirty, and I can see those games with them being a challenge in the future," Fisher admitted. "We

have had one close game this year, but it was because we didn't stay focused in the second half."

While RTR contemplates how to retain their flawless

record, SJA remembers what it was like to be there. They stayed undefeated all the way into week five last year. However, the team failed to come through in the clutch, as they were eliminated early in the post season.

"We have to play smarter and better," said Maj. Phillip Harward, the head coach for SJA. "We shoot a lot of outside shots, so if we have a poor shooting night, we're in trouble. That's what happened in the playoffs last year."

SJA's players remain optimistic, despite knowing that things can turn around in the blink of an eye.

"I am really confident in my team and our chemistry," said Willis Victum, point guard for SJA. "I'm sure we'll be able to maintain this success throughout the season."

However the team may plan to prevent a re-occurrence of last year's demise, the players seem to have found something that is working well at the



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Willis Victum, the point guard for SJA, puts up a three over an Over Thirty defender in a game at the Air Station's Paul L. Siegmund Fitness Complex Tuesday. Victum scored 18 points in the game.

moment. Their one loss came from the first game of the season when they were still trying to get back in the swing of things, according to Victum.


"We were missing our point guard for the first half, and we had all been off the courts for nine months," he said. "I was running track in the off-season

and didn't pick up a basketball almost the entire time."

Both teams seem to be in the swing of things now, and although it may still be too early to tell whether or not SJA or RTR really have any staying power, the players have more than a few reasons to believe they can go far.

"Everybody plays hard and intelligently," said Harward. "I always get 100 percent from the players, so I am optimistic."

Almost two months of play still remain in the season. As past seasons have proven, it can be anybody's ball game.



MCCS–SC Intramural Volleyball League

Play begins Feb. 3, All DoD ID card holders eligible

Mandatory coaches meeting Jan. 21 at 4 p.m at the Fitness Center

